

Mrs. King: 'I Do Think It's The Will Of God'

By KATHRYN JOHNSON
ATLANTA, Ga. (AP) — "I do think it's the will of God," said Mrs. Martin Luther King Jr., a few hours after the death of her husband. "We always knew this could happen."

Mrs. King was in seclusion of her home Thursday night, receiving only a few close friends in her bedroom. Friends and relatives greeted the streams of mourners, who passed 15 policemen guarding the house.

The slender, attractive wife of the civil rights leader was composed but seemed dazed. She wept occasionally and accepted a few phone calls, one from President Johnson.

Mrs. King, who is recuperating from major surgery, reclined on her bed watching television reruns of high moments in her husband's life. She was clad in a rose-colored robe.

A half dozen women friends were in the room with her and the Kings' eldest daughter Yolanda, 12, in pajamas and a robe and with her hair in curlers, lay on the floor, watching.

Mrs. King, 41, was told of her husband's death by Mayor Ivan Allen Jr., while at the airport waiting to fly to his bedside in Memphis.

The mayor had driven her and her two eldest children, Yolanda and Martin Luther King III, 10, to the airport when he received word that King had died. Allen took Mrs. King into a waiting room. She emerged weeping. He then drove her back home.

At Indianapolis, a spokesman for Sen. Robert F. Kennedy said Kennedy had chartered a plane to take the King family to Memphis today and return the body to Atlanta.

Mrs. King requested that the plane be chartered after Kennedy telephoned to ask if he could assist her, the spokesman said.

Mrs. King had long lived with the threat of danger to her husband.

"We have lived with the threat of death always present," she said after her husband received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.

Since 1954, when King began preaching nonviolence as a tactic in fighting segregation, she had seen him jailed numerous times, stabbed once and threatened often. She was with him in 1956 at Montgomery, Ala., with their first child, when their home was rocked by a bomb blast.

Of the effects on her four children, she once said:

"I've tried to give them an understanding that their daddy is trying to help people. The two older ones understand. They take great pride and accept the dangers quite well.

"We all realize that something could happen. If it does happen, I think it will be the will of God. If it does, it would be a great way to give oneself to a great cause.

"But I pray to God nothing happens."

Burlington (N.C.) Times-News, 1968 Apr 5